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Chairman: Mr. RANA (Nepal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 66 AND 155 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. ALLAGHANY (Saudi Arabia) (interpretation from Arabic): Sir, on behalf of my delegation I should like to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of this Committee. I wish also to congratulate the other officers of the Committee and to wish them every success in the conduct of the Committee's work during this session of the General Assembly. I wish to emphasize our sincere desire to co-operate with you in order to discharge the noble tasks with which you have been entrusted.

The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomes the positive developments in East-West relations. The beginning of those developments were clear enough in the meetings of this Committee during the last session. Later, they became more pronounced in the wake of the important political changes in Eastern and Central Europe that have led recently to the reunification of Germany. No doubt, this will pave the way towards more stability and co-operation in the European continent.

Mention should be made here of the other positive developments in other regions of the world, notably the release of Nelson Mandela and indications of a willingness to bring to an end the system of apartheid and the abominable racial discrimination in South Africa. Positive developments have also taken place in Central America, Cambodia and other areas of tension. In all this, the efforts of the United Nations and the Secretary-General, which we value very highly, played an important and commendable role.

(Mr. Allaghany, Saudi Arabia)

Regrettably however, this positive tendency in international relations has not been all-embracing. There have remained some serious regional problems, such as the brutal Iraqi aggression against Kuwait and the plundering of a whole people and an entire country in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. It is also a crime against humanity. Moreover, it poses a threat to the peace and security of Saudi Arabia that has prompted Saudi Arabia to take legitimate measures to ensure the rule of law. In addition, we have committed ourselves completely to the implementation of Security Council resolutions in order to settle this crisis in conformity with the provisions of the Charter.

The question of Palestine continues to be an item on the agenda of the Organization after all these years. The blood of the sons of Palestine is spilled daily in the occupied territories, which the forces of occupation refuse to relinquish, despite all the accumulated resolutions which have been adopted for decades now.

We believe - and this is undoubtedly the unanimous belief of us all - that international peace and security cannot be established without full and complete adherence to the provisions of the Charter - and all the other documents which have come to be part of international law - and the full implementation of Security Council resolutions.

Noticeable progress has been made recently in disarmament negotiations. That progress has been reflected in the détente which we witness in the international arena. However, there are still some Member States which insist on non-accession to the non-proliferation Treaty without any acceptable justification. Those States deny that they possess such weapons. However, all the evidence points to the fact that they do. Particular mention is made here of Israel, which, in addition to its possession of those weapons, possesses both chemical and bacteriological weapons.

(Mr. Allaghany, Saudi Arabia)

All the peoples of the world call for a comprehensive ban on all such overkill weapons thereby bringing to an end the era of their threatened use. We hope that all necessary measures will be taken to prevent the applications of science and use of the materials utilized in the production of weapons of mass destruction. We hope that such weapons will be monitored and that international trafficking in those materials which are used to threaten others will be prohibited.

There are various items on the agenda of the Committee relating to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world. Considerable progress has been made towards the establishment of such zones, except in the Middle East region where Israel denies that it possesses nuclear weapons, or insists on pre-conditions which it knows will not be acceptable to the countries of the region.

The establishment of such zones is bound to contribute to stability and nuclear non-proliferation in the region, and, in general, to complete and comprehensive disarmament. Mention should be made here of the effective and vital role played by the Conference on Disarmament, which, we hope, will enjoy the necessary support from all the States participating in its work.

In addition to the need to conclude an international convention banning the production, use and stockpiling of nuclear and chemical weapons, there is also an urgent need to further the effectiveness of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and upon their Destruction. We hope that this will be accomplished during the Review Conference of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty which will be held in the summer of 1991. Furthermore, we hope that the exchange of information referred to in the Final Act of the 1986 Review Conference will take place. This will undoubtedly enhance the effectiveness of the Convention.

(Mr. Allaghany, Saudi Arabia)

My delegation welcomes the agreement by the United States Senate and the Supreme Soviet Council on the ratification of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water and of the Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes. We hope that negotiations will continue between the two Powers in order for them to reach an agreement banning all forms of nuclear tests, whether in the atmosphere or underground.

What is really disturbing is the problem of the militarization of outer space. We support every effort aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space. We hope that the relevant committee of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva will be able to resolve the differences existing between some States in this connection.

The Committee has before it 27 items relating to disarmament in all its forms, some of which include sub-items that sometimes deal with as many as 10 other subjects. Therefore, in order that the time the Committee devotes to these items may be used to the full, the Committee should concentrate on the items that can be agreed upon easily, or, at least, those on which there is a large majority in favour, or make certain recommendations to the Conference on Disarmament, taking into account the interests and concerns of the countries concerned.

In conclusion, I should like to commend the efforts of the Secretariat, particularly the Department of Disarmament Affairs, for its work on the question of disarmament since the beginning of its discussion in the United Nations. I refer particularly to Mr. Yasushi Akashi, Under-Secretary-General, Department of Disarmament Affairs and his collegues who have made great efforts in this connection.

Mr. SINGH (India): Mr. Chairman, the Indian delegation extends its warm felicitations to you and to the other officers of the Committee on your election. It is indeed heartening to see a distinguished representative of our close and friendly neighbour, Nepal, presiding over our deliberations. We have full confidence that this session will achieve fruitful results under your able guidance. We should like to assure you of our full co-operation as you discharge your responsibility.

(Mr. Singh, India)

The First Committee is meeting at a significant moment in the spheré of disarmament negotiations. New opportunities have been created for the success of disarmament efforts by the sweeping political changes in Europe and in East-West relations. Mankind, however, continues to be confronted with an unprecedented threat of self-extinction arising from the massive and competitive accumulation of nuclear weapons. We therefore welcome the bilateral initiatives taken by the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics towards nuclear disarmament, which are concrete steps in the right direction. In this context, we warmly welcome the award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize to President Mikhail Gorbachev and take this opportunity to pay a tribute to him for the eminent role he has played in the area of disarmament and in promoting world peace and security. We look forward to the conclusion of a treaty on strategic arms reductions (START) and an agreement on conventional forces in Europe by the end of the year, as promised. However, these agreements would not justify complacence on the part of the United Nations or the international public, as huge arsenals would still remain. Concrete disarmament measures adopted so far have been confined to only two of the five nuclear-weapon States; and even these measures - which are incorporated in the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF) - account for a miniscule part of the nuclear arsenals of the two countries. There is no underlying commitment to give up the doctrine of nuclear deterrence. Moreover, avenues for the qualitative upgrading of nuclear weapons and the possibility of putting the fissionable material left over after the destruction of delivery vehicles to military use remain open. This drawback also looms large over the proposed START agreement, which has lowered its sights from a 50 per cent cut in strategic arsenals. It has been estimated that the START agreement would only reduce the stockpiles of the United States and the Union of

(Mr. Singh, India)

Soviet Socialist Republics from their present level of 95 per cent of the world's total to a little over 92 per cent. Even though we acknowledge that the INF and the proposed START agreement are a good beginning and the world looks forward to further and deeper cuts in the context of START II, these facts give some idea of how far we are from our ultimate goal.

With the end of the cold war we feel that this is a most opportune time for the international community to question once again the validity of theories that justify the perpetuation of a strategy based on nuclear weapons. Inter-State relations should be based on co-operation and dialogue instead of on mutual fears and frozen hostility. A new international security order needs to be created to prepare us to move towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. Lasting peace and security can be achieved only with the participation of the international community, based on the principles of the United Nations Charter. Nothing less than a time-bound programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons would sustain a continuous process of substantial reductions until we get rid of the nuclear menace. We also need clear guarantees that the nuclear weapons which are phased out will not be replaced by new and more advanced weapons.

The action plan put forward by India at the third special session devoted to disarmament as an outline for a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world order outlined a systematic, rational and practicable time-frame to achieve those objectives. The plan calls upon the international community to negotiate a binding commitment to general and complete disarmament. The core of our proposed action plan is the elimination of all nuclear weapons in three stages over 22 years. While nuclear disarmament constitutes the essence of each stage of the plan, it also provides for collateral measures like the banning of chemical or radiological weapons, a moratorium on developing, testing and deploying weapons in space,

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development of a method which fosters technological development but interdicts its application to military purposes, development of a single, integrated, multilateral verification system, and reduction of conventional armaments and forces to levels dictated by minimum needs of defence. These measures will have to be accompanied by a search for an alternative approach to security without nuclear weapons which provides for the legitimate needs of all States and at the same time enhances mutual trust and co-operation.

The positive developments during the past three years since the United Nations Conference on Disarmament and Development have only further vindicated the essential premises of that Conference. The world economy continues to be in the grip of a crisis of a structural nature. The recent events in the Gulf region have imposed extraordinary burdens on many developing countries, including my own. In sombre contrast to the paucity of resources for activating growth in the developing countries, a staggering amount, close to a trillion dollars, is being diverted for military purposes every year. The developing countries are doubly affected: first, through the direct adverse effect of the military expenditure that they themselves incur on having to raise the thresholds of their defences to respond to the nature and sophistication of threats to their security globally; and, secondly, through the adverse effect on the global economy of the military expenditures of the high military spenders. Now is the time for seriously exploring ways and means of channelling the peace dividend to the development of the countries of the South, which have had to face the adverse economic consequences of the unprecedented arms build-up of the past decade. The linkage between disarmament and development should remain in the focus of our deliberations during the current session.

The root causes of global insecurity lie far deeper than the calculus of military parity alone. They are related to the instability spawned by widespread

(Mr. Singh, India)

poverty, squalor, population growth, hunger, disease and illiteracy. They are connected to the degradation of the environment. They are enmeshed in the inequity and injustice of the present world order. The effort to achieve security for all must be underpinned by the effort to promote opportunities for all and the equitable access to achievement. Only an enlightened global approach can provide the answer; and our future approach has to be directed by the full weight of multilateral endeavour. Bilateralism and miltilateralism cannot be mutually exclusive; on the contrary, they must complement, facilitate and reinforce each other. In the field of nuclear disarmament, the impact of bilateral progress should be felt in the multilateral field. However, it has yet to be registered in concrete terms in the multilateral forums.

The General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament declared that the removal of the danger of nuclear war was the most important and urgent task of the present day. In subsequent years the General Assembly has adopted resolutions with overwhelming majorities on the most pressing areas relating to nuclear disarmament, such as the prevention of nuclear war, a freeze on the production of nuclear weapons and a ban on nuclear-weapon testing. Despite the very clear mandate given by the General Assembly to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating forum, the Conference has been denied the possibility of commencing actual negotiations on any of these crucial issues.

For many years India has proposed, both at the Conference on Disarmament and at the General Assembly, that the negotiations on a convention outlawing the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is the necessary first step for the elimination of these weapons and for the prevention of nuclear war. Today it is accepted that a

(Mr. Singh, India)

nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. The need for a commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons is now also generally recognized. These positions are incompatible with a security doctrine that reserves the right to resort to nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Singh, India)

A nuclear war cannot de-escalate into a conventional war. It is a dangerous delusion to believe that nuclear weapons have brought us peace. There can be no iron-clad guarantee against the use of weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear-weapon States themselves have visualized the possible failure of deterrence and have taken steps to prevent an outbreak of accidental nuclear war. Human beings are imperfect and prone to panic and folly. The technological systems on which they rely are far from immune to error. Our institutional and interactive mechanisms are imperfect. Moreover, the doctrine of deterrence is based on the erroneous assumption that international relations are frozen on a permanently hostile basis.

The convention on the non-use of nuclear weapons will not only remove the threat of a nuclear holocaust that looms over our planet but will also remove the totally untenable legitimacy sought to be accorded nuclear weapons as a currency of power. In the face of the danger of common annihilation the distinction between the powerful and the weak has become meaningless. Thus, we are convinced that countries that possess no nuclear arsenals also have a responsibility in determining the fate of such arsenals and are determined to exercise it. The sentiment that a nuclear war must not be fought needs, therefore, to be formalized as a multilateral commitment.

Closely linked to the idea of a convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is the appeal to nuclear-weapon States to apply an immediate freeze on the production of these weapons and of fissile materaial intended for weapons purposes. The fissile material to be released by the dismantling of nuclear warheads should be placed under international supervision and not recycled into more advanced weapons systems. The argument that a freeze would perpetuate existing imbalances cannot be sustained. The concept of parity is used sometimes as a pre-condition and sometimes as a goal. The dilemma of parity can be resolved

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only by accepting its total irrelevance to the nuclear issue, whether politically, militarily or operationally. The political momentum that will be generated by a successful strategic arms reduction talks (START) agreement can be carried to its logical conclusion by multilateralizing the negotiations to bring in other nuclear-weapon States which have so far remained outside the process. In such a setting, and in the aftermath of a START agreement, the concept of a freeze on nuclear weapons and the related fissile material would become all the more relevant.

Another related issue is a nuclear-weapon-test ban. For many decades the nuclear-weapon States have ignored the appeal of the world community to end nuclear-weapon testing and to halt the ongoing process of development and refinement of the lethality of nuclear weapons. The Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban of the Conference on Disarmament was re-established late in this year's summer session without a fully fledged mandate to negotiate a nuclear-test-ban treaty. We went along with that decision in the sincere hope that it would mark the beginning of efforts to conclude such a treaty. However, even before the Ad Hoc Committee could adopt a programme of work, doubts were cast upon its re-establishment at the very beginning of the 1991 session.

For a long time the inadequacy of verification was put forward as a justification for not undertaking such a commitment. This has now proved to be unfounded. Developments in seismic monitoring, the proposal made in the six-nation initiative to verify a moratorium on nuclear testing, the results of the deliberations of the Group of Scientific Experts under the aegis of the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva, the possibilities of establishing an international seismic network and the verification protocols for the bilateral agreements between the United States and the USSR on a total test-ban treaty and a treaty on peaceful

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nuclear explosions all clearly indicate that verification can no longer be an obstacle to the commencement of negotiations on a nuclear-test-ban treaty.

The Group of Scientific Experts in Geneva have begun their experiment on the collection and exchange of seismic data at the global level. One step that could be examined for testing the effectiveness of this experiment is the declaration by all nuclear-weapon States of a moratorium on testing to coincide with the experiment. The infrastructure for the experiment could then be made permanent.

The nuclear-test-ban treaty, when it comes, should be consistent with what the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty seeks to achieve and should ensure that the majority of nations are not denied the full benefits of the technological developments in the nuclear field while a handful of States are left free to so benefit. The aim of the treaty should be to prevent the testing of nuclear weapons and thereby to inhibit in a non-discriminatory way the proliferation of nuclear weapons in both the horizontal and the vertical dimensions. It cannot be conceived as an instrument designed to curtail technological progress or to perpetuate the division of the world into two categories of nations. The treaty should be compatible with all existing international instruments dealing with nuclear tests which contain separate provisions for peaceful nuclear explosions, thus taking into account on a basis of complete equality the interests of the nuclear-weapon States as well as those of the non-nuclear-weapon States.

The amendment Conference to convert the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty will be held in New York in January of next year. We hope that that Conference will make a significant contribution towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty - a goal widely supported by the member States and by the world community. India has lent its full support to this proposal, initiated by Mexico, Yugoslavia, Indonesia, Peru, Venezuela and Sri Lanka, because of our

(Mr. Singh, India)

long-held conviction that a comprehensive test-ban treaty is an essential step towards the objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Clear proof of the adequacy of existing verification techniques would go a long way in providing for a successful amendment Conference.

The Fourth Review Conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) concluded its deliberations at Geneva last month. Although India has taken a principled stand against the NPT's discriminatory approach, it is useful to recall that India played a pioneering role in placing the issue of non-proliferation on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly. Unfortunately, the 1968 NPT failed to provide for an acceptable balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations as between nuclear and non-nuclear Powers. India continues to stand for a genuine, comprehensive and broad-based non-proliferation régime as part of a system of international peace and security in which all countries participate on an equal footing and which is designed to rid our world altogether of nuclear weapons.

Outer space has been recognized by the international community as the common heritage of mankind. Developments in space research and technology offer a glimpse of possible benefits for all countries in the fields of communications, meteorology and remote sensing but, for this, outer space has to be kept free of all weapons. Space, the new frontier, should not be allowed to become an area for the application of the doctrine that long-term security is to be based on weapons. Since 1985 the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to undertake concrete negotiations that could strengthen the international legal régime pertaining to outer space.

The existing régime imposes some legal restraints on the placement of certain types of weapons in outer space. However, those restraints are not comprehensive

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in scope, nor do they apply to all kinds of weapons systems. Directed energy weapons, as well as weapons that can be placed in the lofted mode without entering the Earth's orbit, are not covered by the scope of the existing outer space Treaty. Other limitations of the existing legal régime and such bilateral agreements as the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems have become more evident in the light of technological developments.

(Mr. Singh, India)

New legal instruments that would reflect the political reality as well as technological developments must be developed. Proposals have been put forward to provide immunity to satellites, especially those that generate opportunities for economic growth and international security. There is need to amend the 1967 outer space Treaty or to add a protocol to it.

While supporting different proposals for negotiating concrete measures aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space, India has placed particular emphasis on a comprehensive agreement that would prohibit the development of anti-satellite weapons and provide for the dismantling of all existing systems. The Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems places restrictions on the testing of weapons in an anti-ballistic-missile mode, but permits weapons to be tested in an anti-satellite mode. A moratorium on the testing of the existing dedicated anti-satellite weapons needs to be formalized through multilateral negotiations. Confidence-building measures such as "rules of the road", "keep-out zones" and so on will provide only a limited immunity to satellites, the use of which is becoming increasingly important. Full immunity can only be provided by a verifiable, comprehensive anti-satellite-weapon ban. That must be done on an urgent basis before problems of verification in outer space become intractable.

More than a decade has elapsed since the adoption of the Final Document at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which brought out the fact that qualitative and quantitative disarmament measures are both important. Yet at no stage have the qualitative aspects been addressed seriously. Since 1988, India, along with other like-minded delegations, has been submitting a draft resolution entitled "Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security" in order to draw the attention of the world community to that important aspect of disarmament.

(Mr. Singh, India)

Expenditure on military research and development today accounts for 25 per cent of the total expenditure on research and development, and the pace of technologcial change in the military sector is historically unprecedented. New scientific and technological developments making use of miniaturization and large-scale computing capabilities are taking place in the fields of nuclear weapons, ballistic-missile defence, directed-energy weapons, kinetic-energy weapons, artificial intelligence, conventional weapons, chemical and biological weapons and super-conductivity, to name but a few.. The deployment of these weapons will have a cumulative impact, adversely affecting the international security environment. Complex technical problems will make the search for verification even more elusive. It is therefore important that such trends be monitored in the interests of the collective security of the global community.

Given the fact that there are no barriers to human knowledge, what is achieved by a handful of States today can be adopted by many more in the future. It will be prudent, therefore, to agree collectively on the non-pursuit of certain paths that could have a destabilizing impact on the global security situation in the future, rendering existing arms limitations meaningless. Developments in the areas of frontier technology need to be continually assessed. A number of these developments, such as sensor development, communications and computing capabilities can have implications that can prove to be greatly beneficial in the verification of disarmament agreements. Scientific and technological developments must be channelled decisively in favour of peaceful uses.

In our working paper on new technologies and the qualitative arms race presented at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, we outlined our suggestions in concrete terms. In this connection, we commend the work done by the Department of Disarmament Affairs in organizing a conference last April in Sendai, Japan, for an in-depth consideration of this

(Mr. Singh, India)

topic, and the thought-provoking report of the Secretary-General that resulted from the process. We hope the draft resolution on this subject will gather support at the present session.

In the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, concerted attention continues to be focussed on the ongoing chemical-weapons negotiations. We must redouble our efforts to reach an early agreement on a convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical weapons and the elimination of existing stockpiles and production facilities. Some basic provisions of the bilateral agreement signed this year between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the destruction of their chemical-weapons stocks and production facilities have helped to maintain the momentum of the multilateral negotiations.

However, interim measures designed to prevent the proliferation of chemical weapons, apart from not being effective, also run the risk of opening up a parallel track that could easily derail ongoing negotiations and confuse the objective towards which we are working. Political reality dictates that the risk does not come merely from the possible use of chemical weapons but from their very existence. The only way to address this reality is to find a politically viable solution. A convention that can enjoy universal adherence must be non-discriminatory and provide for equal rights and obligations of all States, whether or not they possess chemical weapons and whether or not they have a large chemical industry. It must contain an effective system of verification that reassures all States parties about compliance. It should ensure the unimpeded right of States parties to develop, produce, use, exchange and transfer chemicals and technology for peaceful purposes, and should not hinder or impede international co-operation in areas of peaceful chemical-industry development.

(Mr. Singh, India)

The ideal way to ensure universality is to make the convention attractive to those who join it. An assessment of the total destruction of chemical-weapons stocks must be made at the beginning of the convention's entry into force by all States who subscribe to it, on an equal footing. Any mid-term assessment by those who possess chemical weapons can deter States from joining a convention whose future is uncertain. Finally, taking the priority of nuclear issues into account, the Conference on Disarmament can set itself a time frame within which to conclude its negotiations on a chemical-weapons convention. Negotations towards a chemical-weapons convention is a pioneering exercise that could become the model for future multilateral agreements in the field of disarmament.

In 1988, we mandated the Secretary-General to undertake an in-depth study of the role of the United Nations in the field of verification. That was based on, among other suggestions, the proposal by the leaders of the Six-Nation Initiative to establish a multilateral verification system within the United Nations as an integral part of a strengthened multilateral framework required to ensure peace and security during the process of disarmament and in a nuclear-weapon-free world - a point that was also elaborated in our Action Plan.

The verification of compliance is an integral and important element of any disarmament agreement, even more so in a multilateral context in which all States, big and small, have an equal right to be reassured that treaty obligations are being complied with. We are confident that the world community will show an interest in that study, which will further efforts to strengthen multilateralization of the disarmament process.

In an increasingly interdependent world, the structure of international security must be comprehensive, its components supportive of each other, and participation in it universal. A world order crafted out of the outmoded concepts of balance of power, dominance by power blocs, spheres of influence and special

(Mr. Singh, India)

rights and privileges for a select group of nations is an unacceptable anachronism in today's age. The new structure of international relations must be based on scrupulous adherence to the principles of peaceful co-existence and the Charter of the United Nations. Given the positive international climate and with the necessary political will, it is our hope that we will be able to reach consensus in more areas and on a larger number of resolutions. India will work closely with you, Mr. Chairman, and with other delegations towards our common objectives.

Mr. GAFOOR (Singapore): I am addressing this Committee for the first time. I want to take the opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your unanimous election. My delegation is happy that a fellow member of the non-aligned group has been elected to chair the work of this distinguished Committee. I assure you and the Bureau of the support and co-operation of my delegation.

I have been listening to the statements made in this Committee with great interest. Many representatives have declared that the cold war has ended. I do not dispute their declarations. However, the relevant question is not whether the cold war has ended. What we must all ask is: What will the end of the cold war lead to? What is going to replace the rigid bloc politics of the cold war era? Has the end of the cold war increased the level of regional and global security? The answers to these questions, if indeed they can be found, will shape the future of our international system.

The end of the cold war has not enhanced the security of small and weak States like Singapore. It has, in fact, introduced greater uncertainties into the international system. The significant progress in super-Power nuclear disarmament has had no effect on the ambitions of or the level of armaments possessed by regional Powers like Iraq. Iraq's huge arsenals of chemical and conventional weapons enabled it and emboldened it to overrun its small and vulnerable neighbour. The end of the cold war should not be replaced by a period of regional insecurity. However, the Gulf crisis has led to precisely such a situation. Not only has Iraq's aggression led to a new period of insecurity at the regional level, but it has also led to a massive build-up in the Gulf and surrounding regions.

The mere absence of the cold war does not imply peace. Our approach to international security in the post-cold war era must therefore be based on two important factors. The first is disarmament. The second, and more important factor, is international law. In our view, disarmament and international law are

(Mr. Gafoor, Singapore)

very closely related. They are both part of the general process of building confidence and security in the international system.

To understand the fundamental relationship between disarmament and international law, we must first understand the root problem of our international system. Nations arm mainly because they feel vulnerable to external attacks. This vulnerability is inherent in a system of sovereign and competing States. However, this sense of vulnerability is reinforced when there is a perceived absence of respect for the principles of the rule of law. States also feel insecure when international organizations like the United Nations are ineffective in enforcing the principles of international law.

States arm when they feel insecure. Insecurity is heightened by lawless behaviour. Therefore, to persuade States to disarm, we must first ensure security on the basis of the rule of law. Disarmament can only succeed when the principles of international law, as outlined in the Charter of the United Nations, are firmly established. The rule of law must also be enforced collectively by the United Nations. Otherwise, every country will arm itself at the highest possible level to protect its territorial integrity. This will trigger an arms race. Every country will seek to ensure its own security by arming at higher and higher levels. Such an environment will not be conducive to disarmament.

It is clear that a sense of security based firmly on the principle of the rule of law is necessary for progress in the field of disarmament. It is for this reason that we consider the violation of international law by Iraq as a major setback to regional disarmament. The invasion of Kuwait has reinforced the feeling of vulnerability of many States, in particular those that are small and weak. The crisis has already led to massive transfers of arms from the West to neighbouring countries in the Gulf region. We understand that these arms are necessary to deter

(Mr. Gafoor, Singapore)

further aggression by Iraq. However, we are concerned that the crisis will escalate the regional and international arms race in the long term.

It is important that the Gulf crisis is resolved in a manner that makes it clear to the aggressor that the rule of law will prevail. We must send a clear signal that armed intervention will neither be tolerated nor rewarded by the world community. Such a signal will help to strengthen confidence in the ability of the United Nations to enforce international law. In this regard, I should like to quote from the statement of President Mitterrand of France to the General Assembly at its current session on 24 September 1990. President Mitterand eloquently summarized the views of many small countries like Singapore when he said:

> "To prevent anarchy, disprove the theory that might makes right ... We must all understand that the dawning of the rule of law concerns us all. What country can feel safe from violence, high-handedness and domination by others? The time has come for international law to reign." (A/45/PV.4, p. 36)

The time has indeed come for international law to reign. The United Nations must assume a special responsibility to enforce the principles of international law, because the United Nations Charter forms the foundation of contemporary international law. In this regard, we welcome the new era of super-Power co-operation within the framework of the United Nations. We believe that this new phase in super-Power co-operation, if responsibly carried out by both sides, can allow the United Nations to initiate collective security measures. However, at the same time, the interpretation and enforcement of international law should not become the exclusive prerogative of the super-Powers.

Respect for international law and effective international organizations are handmaidens of disarmament. All three reinforce each other. Disarmament will be strengthened when there is respect for international law. When international law

(Mr. Gafoor, Singapore)

is respected, international organizations like the United Nations can play a greater role in multilateral disarmament. This troika of linkages between disarmament, international law and international organizations leads me to my next subject: the role of the United Nations in disarmament.

The end of cold-war hostilities offers both opportunities and challenges for disarmament. There is opportunity because, in an atmosphere of reduced tension and greater confidence, there can be more meaningful and substantive negotiations. However, there is also the possibility that the great Powers might see less urgency in negotiating disarmament in an environment of relaxed tension. The United Nations should therefore continue to push negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on important issues like a global convention on chemical weapons, nuclear non-proliferation and cessation of nuclear testing.

The reduction in East-West tension offers an important opportunity to strengthen the role of the United Nations in disarmament affairs. It is timely to expand the responsibilities of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

(Mr. Gafoor, Singapore)

For instance, the United Nations has played a very successful role in the field of international peace-keeping. It can play a similar role in the field of disarmament by undertaking responsibilities for verification of multilateral, and even regional and bilateral, agreements.

We welcome the report of the Group of Qualified Governmental Experts to Undertake a Study on the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Verification submitted to the General Assembly on 28 August 1990. The report recognized that:

> "The United Nations may wish to address the multilateral aspects of effective verification measures with increasing attention, particularly as multilateral negotiations become more important." (A/45/372, para. 167)

We wish to record our appreciation of the work of Mr. Fred Bild of Canada, who successfully presided over the study.

There has been encouraging progress in the field of disarmament. The super-Powers have made important progress in their ongoing negotiations on nuclear disarmament since the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - was concluded in 1988. We welcome the determination of the United States and the Soviet Union to conclude a strategic arms reduction agreement in the near future. Such an agreement will make an important contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament. It will also create conditions for peace and security in Europe and beyond. We also welcome the breakthrough agreement on the reduction of conventional arms in Europe, which is to be signed at the summit meeting, in Paris next month, of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). Although it is restricted to Europe, we are confident that this agreement will contribute to global confidence- and security-building.

(Mr. Gafoor, Singapore)

The progress made in the field of bilateral and regional disarmament has not been matched in the area of multilateral disarmament, especially in the fields of nuclear non-proliferation and conventional weapons. However, we are encouraged by the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission in pursuing negotiations in this field. The last session of the Disarmament Commission, held in May 1990 under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Nana Sutresna of Indonesia, produced several important agreements and conclusions on some long-standing items of the agenda.

The elimination of nuclear weapons is a key disarmament objective for the United Nations. The comprehensive study on nuclear weapons, submitted to the Secretary-General in September 1990, has made an important contribution to understanding of the main issues involved in nuclear disarmament. As a small delegation with limited expertise in the field of disarmament, we have benefited greatly from this report. Ambassador Maj Britt Theorin of Sweden presided over the expert group very successfully. We congratulate her on a job well done.

The Theorin report notes that the quantitative growth of nuclear weapons has been stopped. However, it states that the question of the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests remains highly divisive. We are disturbed that the issue of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons has now become entangled w[illegible] the question of the test ban. We hope the respective parties will continue their negotiations in good faith. However, such negotiations must be based on the undestanding that a comprehensive test-ban treaty is related to the question of nuclear non-proliferation. The two issues cannot be isolated.

There have been important developments in multilateral disarmament negotiations in Geneva and New York. However, let us not ignore the broader picture. Disarmament is ultimately a political process. It can only move in tandem with general confidence- and security-building measures. International law

(Mr. Gafoor, Singapore)

is the most important measure that can enhance security and strengthen confidence in international organizations such as the United Nations. Only when we have established respect for the principles of international law can we pursue disarmament meaningfully. If we allow the rule of law to be replaced by the law of the jungle, we cannot hope to prevent countries from arming to the teeth in self-defence. International law is a basic pre-condition of disarmament. For small countries like Singapore, international law is also the only way to ensure our security and sovereignty.

Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand): It would be remiss of me not to extend to you, Sir, my warmest congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of this very important Committee. As a very respected colleague and friend you can count on my full co-operation, if that can make your task any easier. My congratulations go also to the other officers of the Committee.

We are meeting at a time of great changes and expectations. Everywhere we look positive developments are taking place, as witnessed by the momentous changes which have taken place in Eastern Europe. East-West relations have greatly improved. Regional conflicts, including those in Afghanistan, Iran-Iraq and Namibia, have finally abated, after a decade of strife which caused great suffering to the peoples of those countries. In Cambodia, also, there have been encouraging developments and we have reason to believe that a settlement is not too far off. In the field of disarmament, progress has been made on the issue of nuclear disarmament, particularly between the two super-Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. They have now signed protocols on verification of the threshold test-ban Treaty and the Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes. It was also encouraging that for the first time at the Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) the remaining two major nuclear-weapon States - China and France - were present.

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

My delegation welcomes the results in the field of disarmament of the summit meeting between President Bush and President Gorbachev, particularly their commitment to prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, chemical weapons and missiles capable of carrying such weapons. Most encouraging was the reaffirmation of their desire that the strategic arms reduction treaty be signed by the end of the year. My delegation feels that the achievements in the super-Powers' arms talks should add fresh momentum to the multilateral negotiations on these issues.

On conventional weapons and forces, my Government welcomes the breakthrough achieved in the negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States that it is hoped will lead to the reduction of conventional arms in Europe and the agreement expected to be signed in Paris in November by the States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE).

Other regions of the world could also benefit from the discussions and implementation of confidence-building measures. For this reason, my delegation heartily commends the initiative taken by the United Nations recently in organizing the regional meeting in Kathmandu on confidence-building measures in Asia. Thailand believes that the time is now ripe for the countries of South-East Asia to turn their attention to these questions, now that the atmosphere of confrontation is dissipating. The meeting at Kathmandu served in a real sense as an important step in the direction of co-operation and reconciliation.

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

On chemical weapons there is now a heightened awareness of the human devastation that can be inflicted by such weapons. Dangerous developments are gaining critical momentum in the world and make negotiations for the comprehensive convention on chemical weapons a matter of the utmost urgency. The current crisis in the Gulf reaffirms the importance of the task that we in this forum are undertaking. The risk of conventional and, worse, chemical warfare in the Gulf are of great concern to all of us. Thailand calls for restraint by every party concerned and hopes that peace will soon be restored to that region through non-violent means.

Although the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in Geneva recently, did not produce a final document, it should nevertheless be noted that 95 per cent of the text of a final document was tentatively agreed upon. Included in this are measures to make the implementation of the Treaty more effective. Thailand considers that the NPT is one of the most important international agreements in the field of disarmament and that it has served well as a deterrent against further proliferation of nuclear weapons. I should like once again to reiterate my country's commitment to the Treaty and reaffirm our full support for it. We wish to see universal participation and full adherence to this Treaty. We feel that the approach cannot be partial; the Treaty must be implemented in its entirety. We urge every State not yet a party to the NPT to make an urgent effort to become one.

Thailand believes in the use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes, provided that such use is placed under the safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. We also call on the developed countries to provide to the developing countries that are signatories of the NPT adequate technical assistance

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

and co-operation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Effective co-operation can help boost economic and social development in these developing countries.

When it comes to nuclear testing, however, my country is clear and consistent. Thailand feels strongly that there is a need for an effective ban on all nuclear testing and believes that it is long overdue for the international community to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty. In this connection Thailand looks forward to the convening of the amendment Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear-Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, to be held in January 1991. As the first multilateral negotiating conference on this issue, it has a special significance to the international community as a whole. We must therefore seek to obtain concrete results at that Conference.

Thailand has long believed that an important contribution to effective disarmament is the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the various regions of the world. For this reason Thailand will continue to co-operate with its fellow members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations towards obtaining a draft treaty for a South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone. We will also seek to promote this concept with other States, in particular those in the South-East Asian region, for the purpose of obtaining the widest possible support. We hope that this concept and the eventual treaty will enhance the prospects of regional security and of the development of harmonious and neighbourly relations among the countries in the region.

It is a sad reality we are facing today that, despite a general reduction in super-Power arms stockpiling made possible by East-West détente, military expenditures have been growing in many countries, both developed and developing. This military build-up, in particular in the developing countries, adversely

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

affects their economic growth and the employment and living standards of their peoples. We have heard a great deal about the "peace dividend" now that the cold war is said to have ended. We should like to see such dividend usefully diverted to scientific and technological developments to improve the quality of life of the peoples in the developing world.

In the face of the development of new technology, outer space is a new arena to be explored. We must work together to ensure that outer space will be forever preserved exclusively for peaceful purposes. Thailand believes that the issue of prevention of an arms race in outer space deserves the attention and support of all of us.

Thailand has been a firm supporter of United Nations efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament. Today I would like to reiterate Thailand's commitent to co-operating fully with the other Members of the United Nations in the important task before this Committee.

After years of precarious peace between East and West, who could have foreseen the precipitous dismantling of the wall of distrust and hostility that had divided Europe for more than four decades? A new era of hope and reconciliation dawns on that great continent. Yet, war and suffering have at the same time befallen Kuwait and threaten to engulf the entire region of which Kuwait is a small part. Weapons of mass destruction being assembled and deployed bring back recollections of the scourge of war that "has brought untold sorrow to mankind". These developments have made our work here more urgent. Most importantly, these developments teach us once more - and so poignantly - that our hope of ending the scourge of war can come only from our strict adherence to and respect for international law and the United Nations Charter. Only then can we hope to make peace flourish and ensure the survival of our posterity in the manner hoped for by the founding fathers of this Organization.

Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the delegation of Kuwait and on my own behalf, I should like to extend to you, Sir, my congratulations on your election as Chairman of this important Committee.

You are a noble and sincere friend in your relations with others and in the manner in which you represent your country. You have always stood out in whatever you have done, and I think that is why you have been elected. Last year, you stood out as one of the most distinguished representatives in the United Nations and, as such, you were awarded a certificate of merit.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

It is also my pleasure to congratulate the members of the Bureau. I am convinced that, under your leadership, they will be able to conduct our work to a successful conclusion.

The early part of the 1990s brought with it the raising of the curtain on a new act in international relations. It was an act that gave reason for hope and encouraged optimism. Relations between the United States and the Soviet Union turned from confrontation, rivalry and conflicts of interest to co-operation and co-ordination in facing up to threats. The Berlin Wall has coollapsed and with it all the material and psychological barriers which stood in the way of the natural cohesiveness that all peoples and Governments in Europe, both East and West Europe, have hoped for. Today, the world has a unique opportunity before it, one which may make it possible through this détente which brought to an end the cold war, to bring about the realization of the lofty objectives and noble principles of our Organization, and its Charter.

We have witnessed, together with the whole world, concrete and practical steps in that direction in important areas among which have been the two areas of concern to this Committee, namely, disarmament and problems of security and the settlement of regional disputes by peaceful means. There is no doubt that this significant development in the relations of the two super-Powers, which all peoples of the world had hoped for has led to encouraging positive results in the area of conventions on the reduction of strategic and nuclear arsenals as well as conventional forces. Also, the settlement of hotbeds of conflict has been speeded up. At present, both super-Powers are engaged in implementing the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles of 1987. Their two leaders have signed recently in Washington two important protocols on verification measures. That is one more step towards the achievement of the goals of nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

In the teeth of all these positive elements which were viewed as the harbingers of the new world order that was so anxiously awaited by everyone, the Iraqi régime, moved by its greed for expansion, armed with an arsenal for the acquisition and stockpiling of which it has squandered the daily bread of its helpless people, has confronted the world with its actions which have been motivated by its envy of the economic, social and political successes of neighbouring States and their ability to serve their peoples. That régime has dealt a kind of death blow to our radiant hopes by its criminal action against Kuwait, a peaceful Muslim country, the generosity of whose people knew no bounds. By military force, it has annexed the country with unprecedented scorn for the tenets of Islam, the Charter of the League of Arab States, the principles of the United Nations Charter and the norms of international law.

Not content with this, the Iraqi régime resorted to systematic operations aimed at destroying the economic, demographic and social infrastructures of Kuwait through pillage and plunder, murder and the displacement of people. International humanitarian organizations have exposed these practices which are a rarity in the realm of the criminality of States and peoples in this day and age. States and peoples of the world have spontaneously expressed solidarity with Kuwait in the conviction that aggression, oppression and tyranny will not be limited to the victims of the moment. In everyone's opinion, this is a threat to all countries and all peoples.

The world is familiar with the record of the Iraqi régime. It is a régime that is hostile to peace and a threat to its neighbours. The armed conflict between Iraq and Iran was a case in point. That was a conflict into which Iraq plunged its people and the whole region. Its losses amounted to more than

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

$400 billion. About a million young people were killed or wounded, not to speak of the destruction of the economy and destabilization of the region for more than eight years.

All this speaks eloquently of the background of the country and the régime which from one day to the next simply turned its back on all the reasons which had been given for its active aggression against its neighbour, Iran. The actions of this régime are but a reckless adventure that will have serious consequences, not only for the Iraqi people, but also for international peace as a whole.

For years, the Iraqi régime has been building up an enormous arsenal of weapons. The Arab peoples had hoped that this arsenal was going to be a shield that would protect their legitimate rights, in keeping with the United Nations Charter and with the Charter of the League of Arab States. But the artillery, tanks, bombs and bullets of that régime have been turned into weapons of treachery and tools of unjustifiable aggression. We have seen this in the case of Iran in 1980 when Saddam Hussein violated a convention that he himself had signed with Tehran. More recently, the same happened in the case of Kuwait.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

As witnessed by international public opinion, the Iraqi régime has amazed everyone and brought down their curses upon its head as it went on stockpiling the banned chemical weapons which in its war against Iran, the Iraqi régime, with unprecedented brutality, used against soldiers and civilians alike. Indeed, more recently, in Halabja, it used those weapons against its own people. The gruesome scenes were shown by the media.

Today, the Iraqi régime threatens everyone, East and West. The threat of the use of illegal chemical weapons is a serious one, now that so many States are helping the Kuwaiti people in the legitimate defence of their territory. These are the friends upon whom Kuwait has called and who have joined in the international effort under the United Nations Charter. Consequently, the international community is fully justified in its concern with regard to the Iraqi régime's attempts to develop its nuclear programme for illegal and prohibited military purposes that contravene the rules and guarantees of the International Atomic Energy Agency. These policies and practices have very serious consequences for peace and security, not only in the region but in the world as a whole. There can be no doubt that these policies and practices now constitute an extremely negative element with regard to the arms race. They reactivate and aggravate that race on an unprecedented scale as witnessed in Iraq's barbaric aggression against Kuwait.

One of the fundamental principle of the United Nations Charter on which all international norms and relevant rules are based is respect for the concept of the peaceful settlement of disputes between States, the non-use of force in the settlement of disputes. Today, in this Committee, which is concerned with questions of security, my delegation asks, "What about the implementation of that principle, which is enshrined in the United Nations Charter? How is it being applied to the Iraqi régime? Will the international community allow that régime to concoct crises in its relationship with an independent sovereign country? Will

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

that régime be allowed to turn its back on the channels of civilized dialogue, brandish its weapons and kill people in its peaceful neighbour State at will? Will it be allowed to use all kinds of specious arguments that are totally at variance with law and logic?".

The international community as represented by the members of the Security Council and dozens of other international and regional organizations, has answered all these questions, with its unanimously adopted resolutions that show a determination based on the conviction that if ever an aggressive régime such as that in Iraq is allowed to swallow up a sovereign independent country the result will be the collapse of international law and order. Indeed, the result will be the collapse of everything that the countries of the world have worked for through the years. The result will be the end of that striving after long-term stability, and the collapse of the endeavour to replace conflict and confrontation with co-operation and understanding.

The States of the world have been trying to promote peaceful rather than military solutions to conflicts. Hence the firm and unanimous position adopted by the international community against such intolerable and flagrant aggression and oppression.

The world has come far. Today, on the threshold of the twenty-first century, it is proceeding ever more swiftly towards the strengthening of international security, towards disarmament and the peaceful settlement of disputes. It is therefore important that we reiterate our appeal to all States that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We must all act in such a way as to ensure faster progress towards implementation of that treaty and towards the adoption of conventions and resolutions aimed at the halting and banning of nuclear tests. States that do not possess nuclear weapons must be given effective guarantees against their use or the threatened use.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

In a region where Israel has built its nuclear reactors and developed its nuclear bombs and weapons, in complete defiance of international laws and resolutions and of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and in which the Iraqi régime tries to get round the norms of international law, and resorts to all kinds of ploys and unlawful means to develop its nuclear, chemical and biological arsenals, there is an undeniable need to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The creation of such a zone is an absolute priority for the international community. Only in that way can we ensure that that important region - indeed, the peoples of all parts of the world - will not be exposed to a destructive war.

We have seen what an impact the events in the Middle East have had on the entire world. This is an indication of the fact that there are indisoluable links between all regions, that the degree of interdependence is indeed great. Thus there is an overriding need to have a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The creation of such a zone would certainly be in the interest of all States and all peoples.

In this connection, we cannot but condemn the close nuclear co-operation between Israel and South Africa. The unlawful practices of those two countries threaten the security, integrity and stability of the States of both regions. That is why all States, especially nuclear States, and the International Atomic Energy Agency must refrain from providing any assistance or co-operation that might promote the further development of the nuclear capacity of those two countries.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

At the same time, we cannot but urge commitment to the achievement of the objectives of the programme of work of the International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development and must work for the reduction of military budgets so that the necessary resources can be channelled to the goals of peaceful development.

Finally, we should like to take this opportunity once again to express the deep appreciation of the State of Kuwait for the role that has been played by the United Nations in the area of disarmament and the strengthening of security. We hope that the wave of international support enjoyed by this Organization due to its success and progress in some areas will turn into a great force that will lead to concrete support for the objectives of the Charter and help promote sincere respect for its provisions and for the Organization's resolutions. In that way, the stability, tranquillity and prosperity of all our peoples can be guaranteed for the present and for the future.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

FIRST COMMITTEE
12th meeting
held on
Monday, 22 October 1990
at 3 p.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. RANA (Nepal)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 66 AND 155

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS (continued)

Mr. AL-BATTASHI (Oman) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me great pleasure to express to you, on behalf of my country, my congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I wish you success in your well-deserved post. There could be no better Chairman to succeed your predecessor.

Allow me at the outset to affirm my country's keen interest that our deliberations in the First Committee at this session should lead to recommendations and resolutions on the many issues of interest to us as an international community.

(Mr. Al-Battashi, Oman)

The General Assembly meets this year at a time of international détente following the end of the cold war between the two super-Powers. We welcome the positive signs of the prevalent climate of détente, which have shown that dialogue, negotiation and respect for the interests of others are the best way to live in a more secure and more peaceful world. The world regards as good signs the ratification in the United States and the Soviet Union of the agreement concluded between them to eliminate their intermediate-range and shorter-range nuclear weapons in Europe and the intended reduction of their arsenals of strategic weapons. We commend the great and sincere efforts made by both the President of the United States and the President of the Soviet Union to curb the arms race and limit the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. However, the world looks forward to the complete elimination of all devastating weapons as it is not enough to reduce their number and prevent their proliferation.

Disarmament is not the concern of any single country; rather, it is a matter of interest to all nations and all peoples. Therefore, we must take earnest joint action to formulate a comprehensive disarmament programme, to adopt the policy of collective security and apply the principle of solving all international problems by peaceful means, without the threat of force.

While we support all the efforts aimed at halting all nuclear tests and explosions, we hope that those efforts will not become an end in themselves, but a step towards the elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction. The world should be free of such weapons so that people may live in peace and security.

In order for us to realize humanity's aspiration after a world without nuclear weapons we must take concrete action, such as the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Therefore, the Sultanate of Oman supports all the proposals to that end, especially the proposal to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone, a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction. Here we wish to draw the international

(Mr. Al-Battashi, Oman)

community's attention to the grave threat posed by Israel's possession of nuclear weapons and its increased nuclear capability, which threaten destruction and annihilation not only to the Middle East, but to the whole world, particularly since that country arrogantly refuses to place its nuclear installations to international control. Recognizing that that posture could lead to destruction and instability in the region, the Sultanate of Oman strongly supports the Secretary-General's efforts in this regard. We believe that the international community must intensify its efforts and seriously consider the need to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. All peace-loving States should take that need into account and deprive Israel of any help that may enable it to develop further its nuclear capabilities.

Ever since it became a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, which is preparing for the United Nations Conference on the implementation of the General Assembly's Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, the Sultanate of Oman has contributed in every way possible to ensure the success of the Committee's work so that the Conference may be convened at its scheduled time. However, most regrettably, certain States have not shown the necessary flexibility in their positions. This has resulted in difficulties that may obstruct the convening of the Conference, as scheduled, at Colombo, in 1991. The behaviour of those States could have been justified in the days of confrontation between the two super-Powers, but it can no longer be justified, now that the world is for the first time enjoying the fruits of the end of the cold war and the dawn of international détente. We are hopeful that those States will change their positions and show a true spirit of détente and show more enthusiasm for progress in preparing for the conference in 1991.

(Mr. Al-Battashi, Oman)

We also greatly welcome the proposed declaration by the States of South East Asia of their desire not to possess or acquire nuclear weapons. While welcoming the declaration, we call on the States of the area to intensify their efforts to take practical steps to implement the declaration. We urge those States that did not respond positively to the proposal to show flexibility and to co-operate with the efforts to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South East Asia, so that the declaration my result in a binding legal agreement.

The Sultanate of Oman fully supports all the efforts to curb the practice of certain transnational corporations of dumping nuclear, toxic and radioactive wastes in the territoriies of developing countries, particularly in Africa, the Middle East and the South Pacific especially that those States are not responsible for producing the material that result in such wastes.

(Mr. Al-Battashi, Oman)

If such unethical practices persist, they will pose a threat to and have grave implications for the environment and all living beings in those States. We think the international community must deal resolutely with this problem. It should do all it can to contain the proliferation and dumping in all environments of toxic wastes of any kind. Those efforts should culminate in a comprehensive and binding legal agreement that addresses the issue in all its aspects.

The concept of international security in its broadest sense requires close attention to all vital environmental issues such as climatic change, toxic-waste disposal, and environmentally safe development. This is closely connected with the need to view outer space as the common heritage of all mankind.

We earnestly appeal to all the countries which possess the scientific, technological and economic capability not to use outer space as an arena for conflict and not to extend the arms race to outer space and thus expose mankind to annihilation. To be sure, we applaud every scientific breakthrough by any developed country in exploring outer space provided it benefits mankind. We urge that outer space be made an arena of peaceful scientific experiments and exploration that would benefit science and lead to the prosperity of all mankind.

We are acutely concerned by Israel's activities in outer space, such as its launching of a spy satellite for spying on the military and defensive capabilities of Arab and African States. This leads to military imbalance in the region and opens wide the door to the arms race, thus posing a grave threat to international peace and security.

The question of maritime armament is problematical, but it deserves attention. In that connection, the Sultanate of Oman considers it imperative to take all necessary security- and confidence-building measures in order to reduce the threat posed by the possibility of naval confrontation and incidents at sea,

(Mr. Al-Battashi, Oman)

especially in the case of vessels carrying nuclear weapons. International efforts should be coupled with bilateral efforts in this respect. Negotiations should be held in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. There is also a need for security guarantees for non-military activities at sea, for coastal States, and for neutral-State shipping at times of conflict.

Any talk of disarmament should include conventional disarmament, which is inseparable from the whole if we want a more peaceful, secure world. Since the Second World War, the world has witnessed many devastating wars that have been fought with conventional weapons. Those wars have cost the world millions of lives, millions of grieving mothers, millions of widows, and millions of wounded and crippled victims. Great wealth was squandered on the acquisition of such weapons. We still see a feverish desire on the part of many States to hasten to acquire weapons and to squander stupendous sums on sophisticated military matériel, at a time when many suffer from starvation, drought and desertification. There must be concrete steps to end this unbridled race by reducing military budgets. The greatest responsibility in this area naturally rests with the major Powers.

In this regard, we wish to commend the efforts made in the framework of the Stockholm Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) aimed at reductions in conventional weapons.

Recently, since the emergence of international détente, events in many parts of the world have demonstrated that diplomacy and dialogue are the ideal means of settling international conflicts and disputes. Military force is sterile and has become an anachronistic approach that should be abandoned. We all aspire for the

(Mr. Al-Battashi, Oman)

abandonment of military force; this requires that all States abide scrupulously by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and by all United Nations resolutions. States should abandon the use or threat of the use of force in the settlement of international disputes. Dialogue and negotiations should be the sole means of settling such disputes. There must be no interference or intervention in the internal affairs of any State.

That would create the sense of security that is required for disarmament efforts to be concerted and effective. We look forward to the day when peace and harmony will prevail among all peoples, irrespective of country and region.

Mr. ELARABY (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): I wish at the outset to congratulate you most sincerely, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. The delegation of Egypt is convinced that with your enormous diplomatic experience you will successfully steer the Committee's work this year and enable us to achieve our desired goals. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau.

A perusal of this year's agenda of the First Committee reveals many items pertaining to international security and disarmament. We wish to highlight two of those items. First is the interrelationship between the current international developments, the new international political order and the items on the First Committee's agenda on issues of international security and disarmament. Secondly, we should consider the framework in which the First Committee can act in the light of such developments and any progress that can be achieved in the area of disarmament without the participation of the United Nations.

In the past, the challenge that faced the United Nations was to solve the difficult problem of dealing at one and the same time with the issues of international security and the elimination of their political and ideological causes in such a way as to make possible the achievement of real progress towards disarmament and the halting of the terrible arms race which hinders the attainment of the minimal level of co-operation and harmony that is needed to overcome political and ideological differences and the achievement of consensus on international security issues.

Today however, in the new, post-cold war era that has been described rightfully as the era of the establishment of a new international order, the world must shed yesterday's concepts of security which stemmed from the rivalry between the two super-Powers, the existence of two main military alliances and the belief

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

that security could be ensured through military might. The two super-Powers and the other nuclear Powers remain responsible for formulating a new concept of international security pursuant to the responsiblities mandated to them by the Charter. These are heavy responsibilities indeed, but they have to be shouldered. While we believe that the major Powers continue to bear these responsibilities, we in Egypt are convinced that other States will have to shoulder increasing responsibilities in the future.

It is extremely important that the nuclear Powers should pay heed to the thinking and positions of the non-nuclear-weapon States in the field of nuclear disarmament. There is no doubt that the honest and full discharge of the responsibilities of the nuclear Powers requires interraction with the positions of the non-nuclear-weapon States and response to their legitimate needs. It is also incumbent upon the international community to acknowledge that the other States, especially the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, have to respond to those changes by posing their own concepts of their future security needs and wrenching for themselves a greater and more effective role and a greater say in the international arena. That is a role those other States can have only when they become active in putting forward new thinking and new proposals. That is something we look forward to in the near future.

The Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons ended in Geneva a few weeks ago without a final declaration. We have listened here to various points of view and different assessments of what has happened in the Conference and its effect on the future of the Treaty. As we all know, this was not the first time that the Review Conference concluded without a final declaration. The Review Conference in 1980 also failed

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to issue a final declaration without any ill effect on the Treaty and its provisions. Egypt's delegation has no doubt that the ban on nuclear testing, which was the bone of contention that prevented the Conference from adopting a final declaration, is a highly significant question whose importance increases from one day to the next, as it has to do with the interpretation of basic provisions of the Treaty. Hence the need to ensure that the Conference on Disarmament should address this issue profoundly and earnestly and ensure the success of the Conference on the Partial Test-ban Treaty that is scheduled to meet here in New York, next January.

The great majority of States believe that the non-proliferation Treaty is the corner-stone of nuclear disarmament and a crucial instrument for the preservation and consolidation of international peace and security. The Treaty's effectiveness is inevitably affected by two factors: First, the extent of its success in being truly universal and, secondly, the extent of its contribution to the prevention of horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons.

There is no doubt that the decision by France and China to participate as observers in the Review Conference's work must be welcomed as a step towards the Treaty's universality. We hope that this will be followed by more concrete steps.

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In this respect, Egypt's delegation would like to reiterate the appeal to Israel and South Africa to accede as promptly as possible to the Treaty.

With regard to the non-proliferation régime, it is worth mentioning that the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty are entitled to voice a legitimate aspiration for credible security guarantees. In effect, Security Council resolution 255 (1968) implicitly recognizes the principle of giving such security guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States. However, that resolution does not mention all the necessary detailed guarantees which are required by any State that may be exposed to the threat or the use of nuclear weapons, especially as two States, permanent members of the Security Council, refused to vote in favour of the resolution. On the other hand, the resolution did not add any new element to the system of collective security stipulated in the Charter, but limited itself to referring to the right of collective self-defence enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter. Notwithstanding the individual declarations issued by the five permanent members of the Council whereby they undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, those declarations, with the exception of that of China, cannot be regarded as unconditional guarantees.

We have to enlarge further our understanding and consideration of Security Council resolution 255 (1968) and consider whether or not that resolution, which was adopted before the coming into force of the Treaty, is adequate to meet the future requirements of non-nuclear-weapon States, especially as certain nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States have not yet acceded to the Treaty.

Egypt calls upon the Security Council to adopt a new resolution containing credible and dependable guarantees that go beyond the terms of Security Council resolution 255 (1968). We hope that the five permanent members of the Security

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Council will take part in preparing and presenting such a resolution and that the five permanent members will commit themselves unconditionally therein to deter any threat or actual nuclear aggression and provide assistance to non-nuclear-weapon States should they be exposed to nuclear-weapon attack.

After the end of the Fourth Review Conference, Egypt sent messages to the five nuclear Powers wherein it referred to the conclusions that the Fourth Review Conference had been on the point of reaching with regard to safeguarding non-nuclear-weapon States from nuclear-weapon attacks. I once again seize this opportunity to call for responding to the consensus which prevailed in the Fourth Review Conference in this respect, and call for the adoption of another resolution to strengthen Security Council resolution 255 (1968) in the desired direction.

The importance for non-nuclear-weapon States of credible guarantees was reflected also in the initiative by Nigeria, which aims at the signing of an international treaty wherein the depository nuclear-weapon-States would undertake not to use nuclear weapons against the non-nuclear-weapon States. Egypt hopes that this Nigerian initiative will be successful.

I now refer to the convention on the complete prohibition of the production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. The Conference on Disarmament considered this matter in Geneva at its two 1990 sessions. The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Hyltenius, demonstrated competence and experience which are most commendable. However we must admit that 1990 has witnessed no real progress towards concluding the convention. There are still wide differences of opinion on many important issues. I shall not proceed to analyse the reasons for the failure of the 1989 Paris Conference, because the Conference on Disarmament may be the proper forum for such a review. However, I would wish to single out a few important aspects:

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First, we must be very clear as to the nature and general orientation of the convention. There is international unanimity on the need to achieve a total ban, and not a régime that would prevent the proliferation of chemical weapons. We find that the proposals which have been put forward contain certain loopholes which may be interpreted as aiming at a non-proliferation régime and not at a total ban.

Secondly, there is a considerable difference between the production of chemical weapons and the production of nuclear weapons. Moreover, it is much more difficult to apply verification measures in the case of chemical weapons. For these reasons, universality of the convention has been a sine qua non, from the very beginning. The international community cannot tolerate a repetition of the situation with regard to the Non-Proliferation Treaty which still lacks universality 20 years after its conclusion. Therefore, Egypt's delegation believes that the issue of universality should be given absolute priority henceforth and that all States must participate actively in the elaboration of the convention.

In this context, the delegation of Egypt supports the holding of a disarmament conference at the ministerial level to consider all pending issues and adopt all the political decisions required to complete the formulation of the convention next year.

Egypt has also proposed the holding of meetings in the final stages that would be open to participation by all States so that every State will be involved in the preparations and committed to abide by the obligations that will arise from the convention.

Thirdly, the main objective of disarmament agreements is security. In the case of chemical weapons, the new convention must contain precise clear provisions regarding security guarantees for States parties and credible effective sanctions

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to be implemented by the new organization which will be set up or by the Security Council upon the recommendation of the said organization, according to the nature of the breach.

Clearly, any fundamental change in the concept of international security will entail, as of necessity, changes and developments in certain concepts of regional security. Therefore, it is important to mobilize efforts to address the many regional conflicts in various parts of the world, which have been attracting increasing attention recently, especially in areas of tension.

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In this respect, Egypt commends the recent progress achieved in Europe, especially in the light of Europe's continuing concern with neighbouring regions. The most outstanding example of this tendency is the initiative by Italy and Spain which calls for a conference on the security of the coastal States of the Mediterranean. The initiative has been welcomed by the co-ordinators of the non-aligned Mediterranean states, namely Yugoslavia, Egypt and Algeria.

Moreover, Egypt put forward a number of intiatives at the regional level. We continue to work towards the implementation of the declaration of Africa as a non-nuclear-weapon continent. This call was initiated by the African Summit which was held in Cairo over a quarter of a century ago.

Egypt has put forward concrete proposals on the Middle East region. We all know that arsenals in the Middle East have continued to mushroom due to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Iraq-Iran conflict and, most recently, the occupation and invasion of Kuwait by Iraq.

Matters have been complicated further by Israel's refusal to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty or to place its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards - despite the appeals of the General Assembly in the resolutions adopted annually by consensus, on the initiative of Egypt, to declare the Middle East a non-nuclear-weapon zone.

The Secretary-General has completed recently the study requested by the General Assembly two years ago. We hope that the study will be considered carefully by the parties concerned. In this respect, I wish to thank Mr. Yasushi Akashi, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs for their constructive efforts in this respect.

Egypt was one of the first countries to take up the question of the postures of the various States in the Middle East on disarmament. It drew attention to the

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need urgently to address the issue of stockpiling weapons of mass destruction in the region before it became too late. On 18 April 1990, President Mohammed Hosni Mubarek announced a new Egytian initiative whereby the Middle East would be declared an area free from any weapon of mass destruction. The initiative called for the following: first, the prohibition without exception of weapons of mass destruction in the countries of the Middle East - secondly, the co-equal and concomitant commitment by all the States of the region to this prohibition; and, thirdly, the introduction of appropriate verification measures that would ensure full compliance by all the states of the region without exception with the prohibition.

The initiative enjoyed extensive support on various levels. Egypt is studying at present concrete measures of implementation which it will propose at the appropriate time. It is now in consultation with the countries of the region and other regions on the means of achieving the objectives of the initiative, so that the Middle East may be declared a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction under effective vertification measures. As the obligations and measures arising there from should be observed by all on an equal footing, without discrimination, we hope that all States in the region will co-operate with us fully in this respect.

In conclusion, I wish to speak briefly of the future work of the First Committee. The time has come to discuss fully and objectively the question of security in a rapidly changing world. A comprehensive review of the role the First Committee should play will be in order because without such consideration the effectiveness of this Committee could be questioned. Egypt welcomes the consultations that are to be held on this matter. A successful outcome is very much required by the international community.

Mr. AGUILAR (Guatemala) (interpretation from Spanish): As this is the first time that my delegation has participated in the general debate of the First Committee, I should like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. The delegation of Guatemala assures you of its co-operation in ensuring the successful performance of your important duties.

We wish also to thank the Secretariat for the reports submitted to the Committee.

General and complete disarmament has been one of the fundamental goals of the United Nations since its inception. The founding members of the Organization resolved in San Francisco

"to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

Clearly, at that time it could not be foreseen that many thousands of human beings would die in wars that could not be defined as world wars. There have been more than 150 wars since 1945, costing the lives of 20 million persons, most of them civilians. Guatemala and the Central American subregion have not escaped this persisting scourge. While the conflicts have not been international in character, the region has been convulsed by fratricidal struggles and domestic armed conflicts, which have caused more poverty, desolation and bereavement. But successful efforts have certainly led to changes in social relations. Now there is a democratic opening in all countries. The desire for peace is unprecedented. The five countries have renewed their efforts to find joint solutions to joint problems. Peace, development and democracy are inseparable. We are engaged in the struggle to ensure respect for these three basic principles.

To be sure many of these wars have been movements to free territories from anachronistic colonial systems. Others have been caused by the despair of the

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dispossessed majority as they try to improve their living standards and free themselves from the yoke of exploitation, poverty and injustice. Many of these situations were used by the major Powers, which, embroiled in a cold war, caused confrontation and unleashed ideological battles in the developing countries. The year 1989 has gone down in the annals of history, largely because of the drastic change that has taken place in the course of history. The cold war has ended. Peace was achieved in September 1990 when the super-Powers renounced their presence on German territory and on 3 October 1990, allowed the German people to unite, thus ending the Second World War.

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This year the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to the President of the Soviet Union for his efforts to promote peace and disarmament. We congratulate him on his endeavour and express our hope that general and complete disarmament, particularly with regard to weapons of mass destruction, will become a reality, thereby freeing people from the threat of total destruction and making it possible for them to invest their intellect, their human and financial resources in the progress of all mankind towards well-being and peace.

This historic relationship is necessary, in that it enables us to catch a glimpse of a world of peace, hope and renewed efforts for the full development of the human being, once freed from the uncertainty of the tense relations between the super-Powers who, in their eagerness to dominate the world, invested billions of dollars in the machinery of war and destruction. The economic and social aspects of human development were therefore of little importance. Interest was focused on destruction, not construction. Hatred, racism, oppression, discrimination, domination and neo-colonialism were fomented. The emphasis was laid on what divides us and on the advantages of force. Today mankind has the equivalent of 1 million bombs like those that were used at Hiroshima. At the same time 30 children in the developing world are dying every day from malnutrition, hunger or preventable illness - and every minute the world is spending $1.7 million for military purposes.

As of 1987, $900 billion were spent per year, and arms transfers to the developing world were estimated at $30 billion per year. How much could be accomplished in developing countries with such sums of money - if not with all of it at least with half of it! According to reports of the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs the United Nations could operate for two centuries with the budget that has been used for one year on war machinery.

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Guatemala openly supports the efforts of the international community to achieve general and complete disarmament, particularly as regards weapons of mass destruction: nuclear, chemical and bacteriological. It condemns their use and welcomes the fact that the super-Powers have agreed not to be the first to use them. We are deeply concerned about the production, stockpiling and use or threat of use of such weapons, particularly the use of chemical weapons anywhere in the world and most recently in the Persian Gulf, where they have been used.

Guatemala condemns the Iraqi invasion of Kuwaiti territory, which not only constitutes an act that flouts the principles and purposes of the United Nations but also imperils international peace and security. There can be no doubt that this constitutes a reversal of the efforts that have been made to achieve general and complete disarmament. In the course of the first half of this year the machinery used to prepare war had been prepared for investment in civilian development, but today it has been rediscovered that the business of war and destruction continues to be profitable.

We note with concern that the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons ended without adopting a final declaration. In our view, it is imperative that there should be an agreement to prohibit the testing of nuclear weapons. Guatemala will continue to support any efforts towards prohibiting any kind of weapons of mass destruction.

Guatemala considers it important to continue efforts to achieve full transparency in international weapons transfers as the most effective way to maintain control and promote the limitation of such transfers. Transparency in transfers could certainly promote confidence-building measures. The secrecy that surrounds the transfer of weapons has made it possible for war to prevail over peace and harmony.

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My delegation believes that we should investigate the transfer of arms to armed opposition groups, particularly in developing countries. Similarly, one should investigate the relationship between the production and illegal trafficking in drugs and the trade in conventional weapons as a means used to destabilize a number of developing countries and to endanger the incipient processes of democratization and peace.

Guatemala is a party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. We support the resolutions that were adopted in this Committee and we have co-sponsored them. It should however be emphasized that three countries in our own Latin American and Caribbean region have as yet not become parties to that Treaty. There is also one European country that still has possessions in our region that has not yet become a party to Additional Protocol I, which impairs this important regional peace initiative. It must be fully implemented throughout the whole region and we appeal to all countries to do so as soon as possible. Guatemala condemns the use of any territory in Latin America and the Caribbean region as an area for nuclear tests or any other kinds of tests. We support the declarations of nuclear-free zones and zones of peace wherever they may be established throughout the world.

I should like to refer now to efforts that have been made in the Central American region to obtain general and complete disarmament. Once the Esquipulas II Agreement was endorsed, the Central American Presidents decided to move towards peace and democracy and to encourage respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Central Americans. This was successful in several areas, particularly with regard to the democratization and the opening of societies to political pluralism. Countries where there have been internal conflicts have begun talks with the armed opposition groups through commissions for national reconciliation.

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Latin American and Caribbean countries in particular and the international community in general have openly supported the peace process that began in 1986.

The United Nations took part in peace-keeping operations when it established the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA). The International Verification and Follow-up Commission has done groundwork, particularly in the dismantling of the Contras in Nicaragua, where for the first time in recent history it was possible to destroy weapons and war matériel, the vestiges of which are being used to manufacture prostheses for those who have been wounded in the war. We think this practice should be adopted throughout the region as well as elsewhere in the world. The super-Powers have used them in a commemorative work of art, which was donated to the United Nations. These are examples of the drastic change in priorities that must be made in order to bring about a real improvement in human life.

The negotiating processes have promoted the establishment of policies to enhance mutual trust and it has been possible in this way to reconvene the Security Commission in compliance with the appeal contained in Esquipulas II and the Antigua Declaration with a view to consolidating the process of peace and democracy. The Republic of Panama was invited to participate in those meetings as an observer.

In July the following objectives were set: first, to ensure that the armed forces of the countries of the region would be defensive rather than offensive and used only to defend the sovereignty, the territory and the domestic order; secondly, to ensure that the armed forces in the countries of the area would maintain a reasonable balance or an equilibrium that would be proportionate and comprehensive in arms, matériel and personnel and in a way that would mean they would not be a threat to neighbouring countries; thirdly, to define a new model of

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of security relations among Central American States, based on co-operation, co-ordination, communication and prevention; and fourthly, to obtain commitments with regard to the foreign military presence in the region.

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In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, the Commission decided to define the factors that should be taken into consideration in setting military requirements; in establishing inventories of weapons and military personnel; in defining limitations or reductions as a result of comparative analyses; in setting limits that could be exceeded in dealing with domestic conflicts or subversive movements in the area; in reviewing and continuing negotiations on bases, installations, manoeuvres and foreign military advisers. It was considered necessary to establish machinery for monitoring and verification, and the Commission would also promote agreements leading to a climate of trust among the States of the region, thereby promoting good-neighbourliness, friendship, development and co-operation among them.

Moreover, I should like to emphasize that the region has requested co-operation from the United Nations as well as from the Organization of American States. We consider it imperative for the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs to continue participating in the meetings and, when possible, to provide technical and other assistance in this sensitive and praiseworthy task. This is the most important function of the United Nations if it truly is to pursue the principles and aims for which it was established. This effort to establish peace and security and promote friendship and co-operation among countries must be supported by the nations of the world.

The Security Commission met in San Salvador on 12 and 13 September, and also last week in Guatemala City. At the meetings in Guatemala at the technical level it was agreed to establish machinery for reporting military levels to the meetings scheduled to be held in Honduras in mid-November. Meetings would be held at intervals no greater than 60 days, and special meetings would be held when

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necessary. For this purpose, we have requested that the necessary technical assistance be made available from the United Nations through the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

In conclusion, I should like to state that the Member States must avail themselves of this time in history to strengthen mankind's spirit of peace. We must work to erase from the minds of men any desire to wage war. This will be possible only by means of renewed efforts to educate the people of the world about the benefits of living in peace and harmony; of support for human rights, freedom of expression and the exchange of ideas; and of the dissemination of information on the needs of mankind in the social and economic fields. The present social and economic situation in the developing world cannot continue. Peace is fragile from any point of view if the necessary conditions are not provided to ensure that human beings can meet their basic needs of food, education and health. The amount of absolute poverty is growing daily. This situation endangers all efforts to maintain peace and security and imperils established democratic institutions that are the only means of peacefully bringing about change to prepare us to meet the challenge of the year 2000.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Kheradi, who wishes to make an announcement.

Mr. KHERADI (Secretary of the Committee): I should like to draw the attention of the Committee to document A/C.1/45/6, containing the text of a letter dated 11 October 1990, which has been received from the Chairman of the Fifth Committee. The letter refers, inter alia, to a request to the Main Committees of the General Assembly, including the First Committee, to communicate their views to

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the Fifth Committee on the relevant programmes of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992 to 1997, as contained in document A/45/6, by 9 November 1990.

The CHAIRMAN: As members know, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions under disarmament agenda items 45 to 66 and 155 is Tuesday, 30 October. As we are getting close to that date, it would be appreciated if delegations could kindly submit their draft resolutions to the Secretariat for processing as soon as possible. This is especially so in the context of draft resolutions containing programme budget implications. This will facilitate the work of the Committee and will give enough time for its members to conduct the necessary consultations on them and to make their comments, if they wish to do so, before the Committee proceeds to act upon them and to seek the necessary instructions from their respective Governments.

I wish also to draw the attention of members to the fact that a large number of representatives have inscribed their names to speak during the remaining days allocated to the general debate on disarmament items. Hence, in order to accommodate those delegations, as well as effectively to utilize the time and resources available to the Committee and avoid the unnecessary extension of meetings beyond the regular hours, it will be my intention to start the meetings of the Committee at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. sharp. I look forward to the assistance and co-operation of members in this regard.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.